

sometime in the next several hours. We're working hard, trying to turn this thing around. I hope you'll all say a prayer for us tonight, and I hope you'll forgive me for not being there. But just know that it has nothing to do with my profound desire to see you elected.

State Senator Ross. Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you, very much. We're going to win this thing. We're going to win it for you. We're going to win it for the Democratic Party.

The President. Thank you. And thank you, Vic. Thank you, Marion, and thanks, John and Penny. Goodbye, folks. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:12 p.m. from the Residence at the White House to the dinner at a private residence in Little Rock, AR. In his remarks, he referred to dinner hosts John and Penny Burkhalter. State Senator Mike Ross was a candidate for Arkansas' Fourth Congressional District. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks on the Situation in the Middle East

October 14, 2000

Good morning. As you know, we have been working for more than a week now to try to persuade the parties in the Middle East to find a way out of the recent cycle of violence, find a way back to negotiations. I'm very pleased that Prime Minister Barak and Chairman Arafat have accepted President Mubarak's invitation to attend a summit at Sharm al-Sheikh. The summit will convene this Monday, and in the meantime, we expect that both parties will do all in their power to cease hostilities and halt the violence.

Our central objectives must now be to stop the violence, to restore calm and safety, to agree on a factfinding mechanism concerning how this began and how it can be prevented from occurring again, and to find a way back to dialog and negotiations.

Now, we should be under no illusions. The good news is, the parties have agreed to meet, and the situation appears to be calmer. But the path ahead is difficult. After the terrible events of the past few days, the situation is still quite

tense. But President Mubarak and I are convinced that we must make every effort to break the cycle of violence.

Now, as all of you know, I have to go to Denver. I'm running a little late. But the truth is, we're in that period of time where, I believe, leading up to the summit, the less those of us say who are going to be there, the better. And so at least for the moment, I want to let my statement stand for itself. But I assure you I will continue to do everything I can to minimize the violence and to do all the preparation necessary to maximize the chances of a successful meeting.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:38 a.m. in the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel; Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority; and President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt.

The President's Radio Address

October 14, 2000

Good morning. This week an apparent terrorist attack claimed the lives of brave American sailors off the coast of Yemen, and new violence

erupted between Israelis and Palestinians in the Middle East.

Our sailors aboard the U.S.S. *Cole* were simply doing their duty, but a dangerous duty,

standing guard for peace. Yesterday I spoke to the captain of the *Cole*, Commander Kirk Lippold. On behalf of all Americans, I expressed our deepest sympathies and commended him and his crew for the great job they're doing at this very difficult time.

To our sailors' families, let me say we hold you in our prayers. We will never know your loved ones as you did or remember them as you will, but we join you in grief. For your loss is America's loss, and we bow our heads to God in gratitude for the lives and service of your loved ones.

In their honor, I have ordered that flags be flown at halfstaff in the United States, our territories, our Embassies, military bases, and naval vessels until sunset on Monday. As we see the flag this weekend, we should think of the families and the sacrifice they have made for America.

This tragic loss should remind us all that even when America is not at war, the men and women of our military risk their lives every day in places where comforts are few and dangers are many. No one should think for a moment that the strength of our military is less important in times of peace, because the strength of our military is a major reason we are at peace. History will record our triumphs on the battlefield, but no one can ever write a full account of the wars never fought, the losses never suffered, the tears never shed because the men and women of our military were risking their lives for peace. We should never, ever forget that.

Our military power is not all people see when ships of the United States enter a foreign port. When U.S. sailors head down the brow of the ship or our troops set foot on foreign soil, our hosts see in the uniform of the United States men and women of every race, creed, and color who trace their ancestry to every region on Earth, yet are bound together by a common commitment to freedom and a common pride in being Americans.

That image of unity amidst diversity must confound the minds of the hate-filled cowards who killed our sailors. They can take innocent life, they can cause tears and anguish, but they can never heal or build harmony or bring people

together. That is work only free, law-abiding people can do.

And that is why we will do whatever it takes, for as long as it takes, to find those who killed our sailors and hold them accountable, and why we will never let the enemies of freedom and peace stop America from seeking peace, fighting terrorism, and promoting freedom. For only by defending our people, our interests, and our values will we redeem the lives of our sailors and ruin the schemes of their killers.

That includes, of course, our efforts to promote peace in the Middle East. The conflict between Israelis and Palestinians is one of the greatest tragedies of our time and one of the very hardest problems to solve. Every step forward has been marked with pain. Each time the forces of reconciliation have reached out, the forces of destruction have lashed out. The violence we've seen there demonstrates beyond a shadow of a doubt that the alternative to peace is unacceptable, and that no one will gain from an endless contest of inflicting and absorbing pain.

Ending the violence and getting people of the Middle East back to dialog will be hard after what has happened. But no matter how difficult that task may be, no matter how terrible the images of this week's violence, the effort must continue, with America's strong support. We must do so because we have a profound national interest in peace in the Middle East and a very special bond to the State of Israel. As in all the world's troubled places, our efforts do not guarantee success. But not to try is to guarantee failure.

So today I ask your prayers for our men and women in uniform, for the families of our fallen sailors, and for all those here and everywhere who hope and work for a world at peace.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 5:25 p.m. on October 13 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on October 14. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 13 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.